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LOGNOTE -- Chief, Operations Group, 29 December 1983

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1. [] Talked with [] who is here on H/L between African tours. On the subject of the Abidjan Bureau employees' petition concerning the new FBN system, [] says that morale is good at the bureau, the employees like the work, feel proud to work for FBIS, and have no burning grievance. Two things are nagging at them: one, the Embassy has not granted a pay raise for two years, because it wanted to go along with the Ivorian Government's policy of holding down pay increases as an anti-inflationary step, though businesses in Abidjan and quasi-governmental organizations like the African Development Bank have granted substantial pay increases. Second, the bureau employees feel that they do harder work than Embassy employees whom they see as overgraded and underqualified. [] says there is merit in this view as the Embassy demands little from its employees and has permitted a considerable amount of overgrading, particularly secretaries of senior officers and people in the personnel office.

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Although the African Development Bank is cited as the prime example for translator pay, our employees feel that people are not well treated at ADB and we have lost only one translator [] to the ADB. [] said the bureau was not really unhappy to see [] go. Her husband had been giving the bureau fits about her working evenings and she was constantly asking to have her shifts changed, which did not sit well with the other monitors.

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Recruiting has been fairly good lately, and the bureau has two good prospects lined up--one a Ghanaian and the other an Ivorian. I said they should try to give preference to Ivorians to the extent possible. [] said he had suggested the bureau hire both applicants, double slotting one against [] position. It is not certain, however, that [] will retire in May as he has announced. [] feels that when he sees the upcoming pay increase [] may decide to hang around a while longer. [] is 63, is married for the second time and has a new baby.

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I remarked that the bureau had looked very good the past two years and had collected a lot of praise for its coverage of the frequent coups in their area. [] said that the African embassies are so small that they really value the bureau's work and will speak up about it. [] says that the coups have been good training and a good test for the bureau staff, while the praise has made them feel good about their jobs.

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[] says relations with the Embassy [] are excellent. Everyone likes the new Ambassador, who can be expected to be much more receptive and flexible than Ambassador Rawls.

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On the subject of security, [] said that the Embassy had only recently got around to replacing the glass picture windows at the front entrance with bulletproof glass. The bureau feels quite secure because of their isolated position.

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(cc: D/FBIS, C/DRD, C/MOD)

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